

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Any teacher or other school employee who suspects that a child under eighteen (18) years of age has been neglected or physically abused (including sexual or emotional abuse) by a parent/guardian or other person, will report orally or in writing this information to the building principal or superintendent. The principal or superintendent should immediately report this information to the state's attorney, the Department of Social Services, the county sheriff, the city police, or the school resource officer. If the principal or superintendent does not confirm to the teacher or other employee within twenty-four (24) hours that action has been initiated, the employee will report this information directly to the proper authorities.

The report will contain the following information: name, address, and age of child; name and address of parent or caretaker; nature and extent of injuries or description of neglect; and any other information that might help establish the cause of injuries or condition.

School employees, including administrators, will not contact the child's family or any other persons to determine the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect. It is not the responsibility of the school employees to prove that the child has been abused or neglected, or to determine whether the child is in need of protection, but only to report his suspicions of abuse or neglect.

Anyone who participates in making a report in accordance with the law and in good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability that may otherwise arise from the reporting, or from any resulting judicial proceeding, even if the suspicion is proved to be unfounded.

Any personal interview or physical inspection of the child should be conducted in a considerate, professional manner. Information or records concerning reports of suspected abuse or neglect are confidential. The release to persons other than those provided by law is punishable by a \$1,000 fine, one (1) year in jail, or both. Failure to make a report where abuse or neglect is suspected is subject to the same punishment.

Copies of this policy will be distributed by the superintendent to all school employees at the beginning of each school term, and to new employees when they begin employment if at a different time than the beginning of the school term.

LEGAL REFS.: SDCL 26-8A-6
26-8A-3; 26-8A-6 through 26-8A-15